



NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut

Human Services Committee
SB 927, An Act Concerning the Quality of Services for Recipients of Services
Under a Medicaid Waiver

Testimony of Jillian Gilchrest, Executive Director

NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut

February 24, 2009

Good afternoon Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Jillian Gilchrest and I am the executive director of NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut and Vice Chair to the Connecticut Coalition for Choice. NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut is a statewide political advocacy non-profit that works to guarantee every woman the right to make personal decisions regarding the full range of reproductive choices and the Connecticut Coalition for Choice is comprised of 15 organizations that collectively represent over 130,000 individuals statewide.

I am here in support of SB 927, An Act Concerning the Quality of Services for Recipients of Services Under a Medicaid Waiver. Currently, the state of Connecticut has the opportunity to receive a 90% federal Medicaid match—when the state's normal federal match is 50%—by applying for a Section 1115 waiver otherwise known as the family planning waiver.

The family planning waiver provides Medicaid coverage for family planning services to individuals in households with income up to 185% of the Federal Poverty Level who are not otherwise eligible for Medicaid-- individuals of child bearing age who do not already have children. The current income ceiling for Medicaid coverage is 157% of poverty; while the ceiling for pregnancy related care is 185% of poverty.

The objectives of the family planning waiver are to:

- Increase the availability and proper use of effective contraceptive methods,
- Increase the spacing between pregnancies,
- Decrease the number of unintended pregnancies,
- Decrease the number of Medicaid paid pregnancies and deliveries, and
- Improve reproductive health.

According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, establishing parity between the Medicaid eligibility level for family planning and the level for pregnancy-related care that Connecticut currently receives would result in state savings of \$15.5 million annually.¹

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NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut
135 Broad Street
Hartford, CT 06105
860-524-1086

SB 927 requires that the Commissioner of Social Services apply for a Medicaid family planning waiver no later than September 1, 2009. Currently, 27 states have Medicaid Family Planning Waivers. Please allow Connecticut to join these states by supporting this legislation and preventative services that will benefit Connecticut's citizens while saving the state dollars.

¹ Frost JJ, Sonfield A and Gold RB, Estimating the Impact of Expanding Medicaid Eligibility for Family Planning Services, *Occasional Report*, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2006, No. 28.

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